

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9994
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05448

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR XF FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP

1. SUMMARY: SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL GAVE DCM
HIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S IMPRESSIONS OF LATTER'S
MIDDLE EAST TRIP. BASIC IMPRESSION WAS POSITIVE,
FOCUSING ON "REALISM" OF ARABS AND THEIR READINESS TO
NEGOTIATE SIGNED NON-BELLIGERENCY AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL.
DESPITE "CIA REVELATIONS" REGARDING HUSSEIN, FRENCH
HOPE MODERATE PALESTINIANS MAY BE ABLE TO WORK OUT
FEDERATION ARRANGEMENT WITH JORDAN WHICH WILL FACILITATE
RETURN TO GENEVA TABLE. THEY FIND ASSAD REASSURING
ON LEBANON. END SUMMARY

2. IN CALL ON FRANCOIS DE LABOULAYE, DIRECTOR
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY, DCM WAS
GIVEN FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DE LABOULAYE AND FOREIGN
MINISTER GUIRINGAUD OF LATTER'S TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST
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CAPITALS, ON WHICH DE LABOULAYE ACCOMPANIED HIM. DE
LABOULAYE STRESSED THAT THESE WERE FIRST IMPRESSIONS
SINCE TRIP WAS RAPID AND FOREIGN MINISTER WISHES TO
SORT OUT HIS IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS FOLLOWING RETURN TO
PARIS AT MIDNIGHT TUESDAY.

3. DEEPEST IMPRESSION RECEIVED BY FRENCH TRAVELERS

WAS OF "REALISM" OF THE ARABS, WHO THEY FIND HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD MODERATE POSITION. FRENCH HAVE IMPRESSION THAT THE FIVE ARAB CAPITALS ARE ALL PREPARED TO SEE A SETTLEMENT, ON PAPER AND SIGNED WITH ISRAELIS WHICH WOULD ACCEPT EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AND NON-BELLIGERENCY BETWEEN IT AND NEIGHBORS. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND COMMERCE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FOR LATER STAGE.

4. DE LABOULAYE DEPLORED RECENT PRESS ALLEGATIONS OF CIA SUBVENTIONS TO HUSSEIN WHICH HE SAID ONLY HELPED PALESTINIAN INTRANSIGENTS. HE HOPES NEVERTHELESS THAT JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN DISCUSSIONS MAY MAKE POSSIBLE A CONFEDERAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A WAY AROUND PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE AT GENEVA.

5. ASKED ABOUT SYRIAN ATTITUDES, DE LABOULAYE WAS EMPHATIC IN PRAISE FOR ASSAD, WHO IMPRESSED GUIRINGAUD AS REAL STATESMAN. ASSAD, THOUGH LESS EAGER THAN EGYPTIANS, OWING TO LATTERS PARLOUS DOMESTIC SITUATION, WAS STILL READY TO MOVE AHEAD TOWARD NON-BELLIGERENCY SETTLEMENT DESCRIBED ABOVE. DE LABOULAYE ASKED WHEN SECRETARY VANCE AND FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD COULD BE SCHEDULED TO SEE ONE ANOTHER, AND DCM RESPONDED THAT HE PERSONALLY KNEW OF NO SCHEDULED OCCASION BUT HOPED THAT SECRETARY MIGHT MAKE A DEBRIEFING STOP IN BRUSSELS AFTER SOVIET VISIT AT THE END OF MARCH. DCM VOLUNTEERED THAT SECRETARY WOULD WELCOME ANY INFORMATION AND THOUGHTS ON HIS MIDDLE CONFIDENTIAL

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EAST TRIP GUIRINGAUD WILLING TO SHARE WITH HIM.

6. ON SUBJECT OF LEBANON, DE LABOULAYE NOTED THAT ASSAD HAD VOLUNTEERED CATEGORICAL ASSURANCES THAT ALL SYRIAN TROOPS WOULD BE REMOVED FROM LEBANON AS SOON AS VIABLE LEBANESE ARMY WAS RECONSTITUTED. DE LABOULAYE NOTED THAT SYRIANS EXPECTED TO RETAIN PARAMOUNT INFLUENCE IN LEBANON BUT EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT SYRIAN ROLE HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE. ASSAD DESCRIBED TO GUIRINGAUD THE DIFFICULTIES OF HIS ROLE IN SYRIA IN THE FACE OF LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND THREATS FROM NEIGHBORS AND THE BIG TWO, INCLUDING SOVIET WITHHOLDING OF ARMS. RUSH

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